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ABSTRACT

Outlined in this paper are the following: (1) Federal guidelines, regulations, and approvals regarding the awarding of funds to a local educational agency in response to a grant application; (2) the role of the director in defining the scope and position of the project within the parent institution; (3) suggestions for developing a management style; (4) recommendations for delineating and analyzing policies and procedures; (5) the advantages of linkages/interfaces with allied agencies and institutions; (6) criteria and considerations in program evaluation, validation and reporting; and (7) responsibilities of the project director in assuring the continuation of a particular project. References are made to specific literature which would be helpful to an inexperienced project director. A list of general references is also included. Aspects of different administrative styles and a listing of "do's and don'ts" of project administration are appended. (EB)

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A Guide for Inexperienced Project Directors of Federally Funded Education Projects

Submitted by

Robert R. Byrd

July 1977

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OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Federal Guidelines, Regulations and Approvals

II. Scope and Position of Project Within Parent Institution

1. Philosophical Relationships
2. Legal and Official Relationships

III. Management Style

IV. Policies and Procedures

V. Linkages/Interfaces With Allied Agencies and Institutions

1. Cooperative Planning and Arrangements
2. Communications and Dissemination

VI. Evaluation/Validation/Reporting

VII. Project Continuation

VIII. Conclusion

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A GUIDE FOR INEXPERIENCED PROJECT DIRECTORS OF FEDERALLY FUNDED EDUCATION PROJECTS

INTRODUCTION

Most school units in North Carolina and nationwide are receiving an increasing variety of federal support for education projects. Most of the federally funded projects have guidelines which require a person to be designated as the "project director", thus creating a situation where the Local Educational Agency usually--hires a project director, assigns the responsibility as an additional responsibility to a person already on the payroll, or transfers a person already on the payroll to a position of either full-time or, in some cases, part-time project director.

Many times the above stated procedures result in persons with little or no experience and/or training in administration and management being hired. It is not uncommon that an excellent classroom teacher will be promoted to a project directorship.

Generally project management skills can be acquired over a period of time once the director is active in day-to-day managerial tasks. Frequently, however, "trial and error" becomes the rule during the early phases of project management, thus resulting in the inefficient utilization of time and resources.

The purpose of this paper is to provide (in an outline form) a simplified guide for new and inexperienced directors of federally funded education projects in public school systems. For the purpose of simplification, the author assumes a situation wherein the Local Educational Agency has already obtained a federal grant and hired an inexperienced project director.

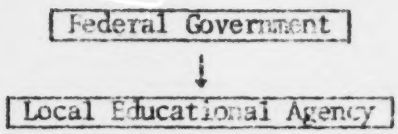
I. FEDERAL GUIDELINES, REGULATIONS AND APPROVALS

The Federal Government awards grants or contracts to Local Educational Agencies either (a) directly, or (b) through the State "flow through" process as shown in Table I.

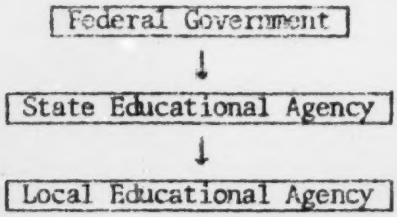
Table I

Federal Funding to LEA Process

(a)



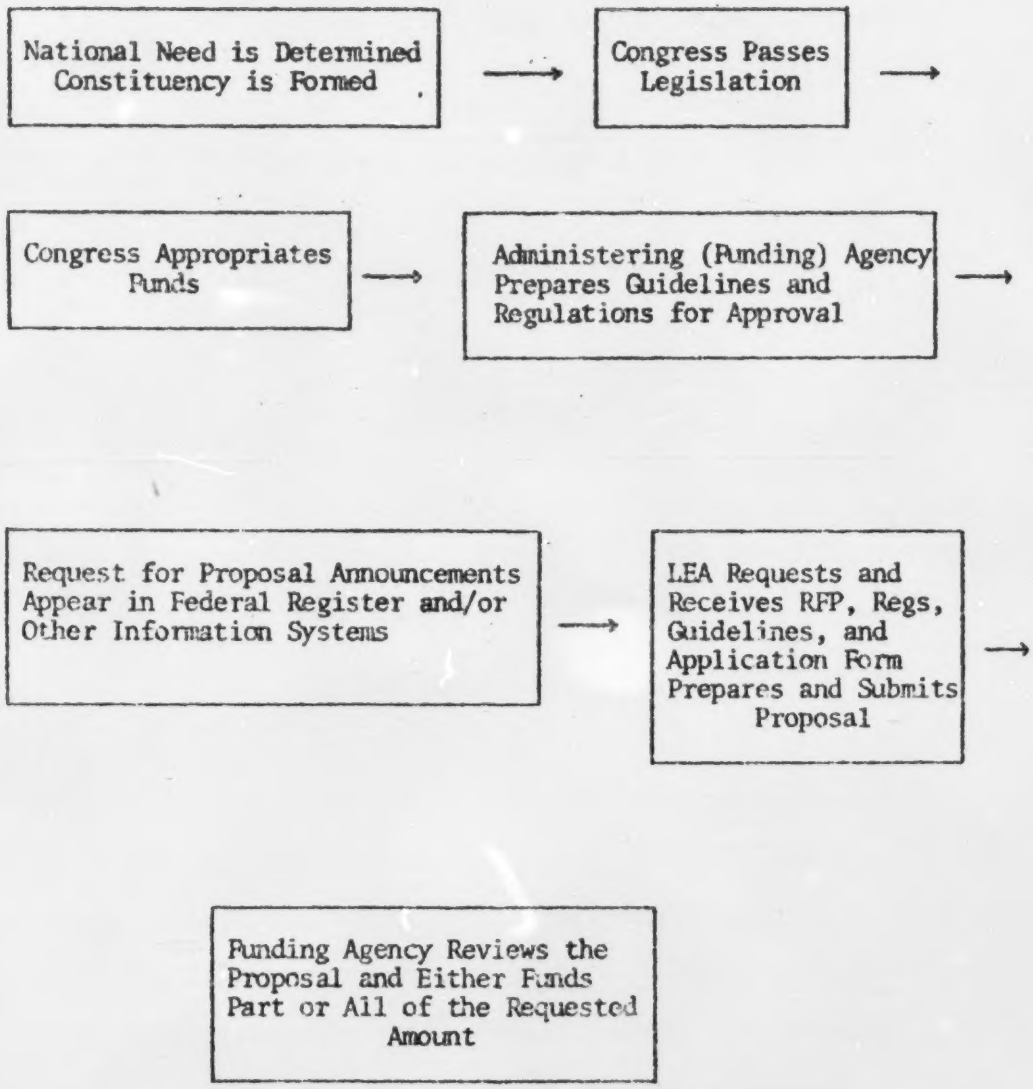
(b)



In either case, (a) or (b), as outlined in Table I, the funds are awarded to the Local Educational Agency in response to a grant application (proposal or plan) submitted by the Local Educational Agency which is in response to a funding-agency solicitation sometimes known as Request for Proposal (RFP). A simplified diagram of the process appears in Table II

Table II

A Simplified Diagram of the Federal Funding Process


National Need is Determined Constituency is Formed
Congress Passes Legislation
Congress Appropriates Funds
Administering (Funding) Agency Prepares Guidelines and Regulations for Approval
Request for Proposal Announcements Appear in Federal Register and/or Other Information Systems
LEA Requests and Receives RFP, Regs, Guidelines, and Application Form Prepares and Submits Proposal
Funding Agency Reviews the Proposal and Either Funds Part or All of the Requested Amount

The Request for Proposal, the Grant Application and the Notification of Grant Award (notification of funding) will provide a tremendous amount of program direction such as goals, target groups, objectives, proposed tasks, staffing patterns, evaluation strategies, and the line item budget, thus one of the most important tasks a new project director can engage in is that of analyzing and becoming thoroughly familiar with the proposal, the federal regulations (regs), and the budget in order to determine the goals of the project and how the goals of the project are to be accomplished.

The assistance of the Project Officer (the official State/ Federal contact person) can be solicited and should prove to be very helpful in the proposal analysis and expectation setting process.

II. SCOPE AND POSITION OF PROJECT WITHIN PARENT INSTITUTION

When a new project director is hired, he or she will have numerous questions relative to the overall functioning of the project. Many of the questions will be addressed through the analysis of the RFP, the Grant Application and the Notification of Funding. However, other questions relate directly to the parent institution (LEA) and should be addressed at that level.

1. Philosophical Relationships

The new project director should determine why the Local Educational Agency developed the project and where the project "fits in" the overall school system plan.

The basic approaches to be utilized in project operation should have the support of the Local Educational Agency's leadership and other referent groups.

2. Legal and Official Relationships

Legal and official relationships between the project and parent institution should be clearly delineated. The project director's responsibility in the process of hiring project staff, firing project staff, encumbrance of project funds, preparing and authorizing budget and proposal amendments, and orchestrating future project continuation should be discussed with appropriate persons and the project director's responsibility should be clearly delineated. Once the responsibility and authority of the project director is determined, the project director can proceed with greater ease in the decision making process.

III. MANAGEMENT STYLE

Most project directors have responsibility to provide leadership, supervision, and direction to project staff. A variety of management styles have been described in recent literature; however, the administrative process as described by Getzels and Guba[1] seems to be very appropriate to the administration of educational projects in that the model suggests that the unique task of administration, at least with respect to staff relations, is the integration of institution and staff demands in an individually and organizationally productive manner.

It is suggested that the project director participate in seminars on shared decision making, group interactions, organizational development, and the like in order to develop and sharpen administrative skills.

Visitations for the purpose of reviewing related education projects can be extremely valuable and should be encouraged. When possible, the project staff should visit as a team and should review the overall as well as the subsystems of project organization.

Generally a management style which can adjust to the needs of different situations is suggested. The National Academy for School Executives (NASE)[2] utilized the descriptions of friendly helper, tough battles and objective thinker as being appropriate to describe prominent administrative styles. A person who predominately utilizes only one style is most likely to have continuing managerial problems--especially in staff supervision, whereas ideally, the effective manager should be able to apply the appropriate style that the individual or situation needs. (See Appendix A "Three Bests of All Possible Worlds.)

IV. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The development and utilization (implementation) of policies and procedures is the major task of a manager. Many policies and procedures are "givens" from the Funding Source, State Law,

LEA Board, School Building, etc. These pre-established policies and procedures should be analyzed and delineated. In a new project, there may need to be additional policies and procedures generated. It is recommended that a policy notebook be prepared and that policies and procedures addressing the following areas be included.

1. Personnel - selection (hiring), dismissal, job descriptions, grievance procedures, evaluation, retirment, etc.
2. Operational - working hours, security procedures, fiscal, communications, special assignments, inventory labeling of equipment, shelving and storage of items, travel, etc.

The project operational procedures included in the notebook will be essentially a guide to project operation.

V. LINKAGES/INTERFACES WITH ALLIED AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS

1. Cooperative Planning and Arrangements

A project director would be foolish not to cultivate the establishment of positive relations with appropriate referent groups.

Sometimes the very life of a project depends on the degree of reciprocity between it and related agencies and institutions.

Related agencies should be given information on the nature and progress of the project.

Inter-agency cooperation can expand greatly the capability of many projects; however, inter-agency cooperation does not just happen necessarily. Frequently, it occurs as a result of long hours of negotations. Any agreements for cooperation should be confirmed in writing.

2. Communications and Dissemination

Since biblical times, the importance of communication of attributes and successes has been recognized. The development of an active communication system should be a major project priority. It is virtually impossible for a federally funded education project to operate successfully in an isolationist fashion. Prime ingredients of an active communications system include the effective usage of mailing lists, telephone, newsletter, routine correspondence, "Rolodex" retrevial, personal visits, sharing materials, accurate up-to-date reports, evaluation results, briefings, workshops and orientation sessions.

Communications should be accurate, speedy and functional. The usage of complicated words and symbols usually impede the communication process.

VI. EVALUATION/VALIDATION/REPORTING

Practically all federally funded proposals require an evaluation design. While the array of currently used evaluation models and designs is broad, Horst, Tallmadge and Wood[3] have

recently described five models for measuring project impact on student achievement which project directors should be familiar with.

The models are: a. post test comparison with matched groups, b. covariance analysis, c. special regression models, d. general regression model, and e. the norm-referenced model.

Shaffer (1974)[4] in the Guide for On Site Validation Team Procedures for ESEA, Title III Practices delineates the most common evaluation designs utilized in the ESEA, Title III projects.

As soon as possible after employment, the project director should review the proposal evaluation design and develop a time line for implementation. Evaluation data should be collected throughout the duration of the project, as much as possible, in order to prevent the usual end of the project year panic.

It is advisable that someone with expertise in evaluation assist with the design, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. Many projects do not have staff with such capability, and therefore, must rely upon outside consultants to perform such services.

The selection of an evaluation consultant should be a serious undertaking and not passed over lightly. Certain questions should be considered in the selection process.

What evidence is there that the prospective consultant can do the job?

How long (many years) will the consultant be able to serve the project?

What are the costs?

What will the project get from the consultant?

Many times the selection of an evaluation consultant can be like buying a "pig in a poke" in that you may not know what you have purchased until it's too late, therefore, it is recommended that a detailed written agreement clearly specifying the roles of the evaluator and project director and other actors be consummated. Such an agreement should specify the deliverables which the evaluator is to provide, the time frame and format in which they are to be provided, and the cost.

The United States Office of Education (USOE) has established a national validation process.[5] In addition, several states (including North Carolina) have designed an in-state validation process. The program purpose of validation is to verify the project claims as to success effectiveness, cost and exportability.[6] Validation is very important if the project is to be actively disseminated outside the Local Educational Agency in which it operates. Usually validation does not occur until the third year of the project; however, the decision of going for validation should be made much earlier. Project directors interested in obtaining additional information on validation should contact the State Department of Education, Title IV-C Director.

The reporting of project progress is extremely important. The funding agencies, the parent institution, allied agencies, project staff, and other referent persons have a need to receive clear concise and updated reports on project activities and progress. In addition, to the federally required progress reports, a newsletter or some type of low-cost progress report may be necessary to keep appropriate referent persons adequately informed. When possible, oral and/or mediated presentations by project staff to key referent persons and groups should be given.

VII. PROJECT CONTINUATION

If the project director and the parent institution expect the project to continue beyond the first project period (usually one year), it can generally be assumed that the project director will have the responsibility for laying the necessary groundwork with prospective funding sources and orchestrate the development and submission of grant applications (proposals) for continued funding.

Byrd (1977)[7] has delineated Recommended Procedures for the Identification and Procurement of Federal Funds for Educational Projects which should be of assistance to the novice grantsperson. The timing of the decision, is of paramount importance in funding continuation efforts. The decision to "go" for continued funding should be made and approved (by appropriate Local Educational Agency persons)

no later than four months prior to the termination of the project. Last minute funding solicitation (dollar hustling) is usually non-productive and sometimes counter productive. It should be noted, however, that many projects are generally understood to be multi-year projects, contingent upon successful performance, and thus in such projects, the continuation of funding is a relatively simple process of submitting a "plan for approval."

VIII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the "new" project director needs to realize that she or he is being paid to make and orchestrate decisions across a broad range of specific areas such as staff recruitment, program planning, program budgeting, group facilitation, curriculum development, funding procurement, funding encumbrance, facilities, material packaging and shelving, public involvement, multi-agency cooperation, dissemination and others. The project director may have previously been a specialist in a narrow skill area; however, his or her success as a project director may be in direct proportion to their ability in generalist skill development.

Byrd and Coxton (1975)[8] have developed a simplified listing (see Appendix B) of "Do's and Don'ts of Project Administration" which is hereby recommended to the novice project director for study. While the listing is simple and concise, it reveals some of the more crucial subtleties of project management.

Finally, while it is difficult to communicate the essence of project management to disinterested parties, it is felt that the previously described suggestions will be highly relevant to new and inexperienced directors of federally funded education projects.

REFERENCES

[1]Getzels, J. W. and Guba, E. G., "Social Behavior and the Administrative Process", The School Review, Vol. 65, No. 4 (1957), pp. 423-441.

[2]National Academy for School Executives, Optimizing Group Resources: Making It Happen, (Institute) 1975.

[3]Horst, D., Tallmadge, G., and Wood, C., A Practical Guide to Measuring Project Impact on Student Achievement, RMC Research Corporation, (1975), p. 47.

[4]Shaffer, S., Guide for On Site Validation Team Procedures for ESEA, Title III Practices, Scientific Management Associates, (1974), pp. 46-60.

[5]U.S.O.E., Sharing Educational Success, "A Handbook for Validation of Education Practices", 1974, pp. 1-5.

[6]Ibid., pp. 21-58.

[7]Byrd, R., "Recommended Procedures for the Identification and Procurement of Federal Funds for Educational Projects" (unpublished) 1977, pp. 1-10.

[8]Byrd, R., and Coxton, B., "Do's and Don'ts of Project Administration" (unpublished) 1975, pp. 1-2.

APPENDIX A

Administrative Styles

"Three Bests of All Possible Worlds"

Appendix A

TABLE 1: THREE BESTS OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS

Friendly Helper	*Tough Battler*	*Logical Thinker*
a world of mutual love, affection, tenderness, sympathy	a world of conflict, fight, power, assertiveness	a world of understanding, logic, systems, knowledg
	Task Maintenance Behavior	
Harmonizing	Initiating	Gathering information
Compromising	Coordinating	Clarifying ideas and words
Gatekeeping by concern	Pressing for results	Systematizing
Encouraging	Pressing for concensus	Procedures
Expressing warmth	Exploring differences	Evaluating the logic of proposals
	Gatekeeping by command	
	Constructs Used in Evaluating Others	
Who is warm and who is hostile?	Who is strong and who is weak?	Who is bright and who is stupid?
Who helps and who hurts others?	Who is winning and who is losing?	Who is accruate and who is inaccurate?
		Who thinks clearly and who is fuzzy?
	Methods of Influence	
Appeasing	Giving orders	Appealing to rules an regulations
Appealing to pity	Offering challenges	Appealing to logic
	Threatening	Referring to "facts" and overwhelming knowledge
	Personal Threats	
That he will not be loved	That he will lost his ability to gith (power)	That his world is not ordered
That he will be overwhelmed by feelings of hostility	That he will become "soft" and "sentimental"	That he will be overwhelmed by love or hate

APPENDIX B

"Do's and Don'ts

of

Project Administration"

Appendix B

"DO'S AND DON'TS

OF

PROJECT ADMINISTRATION"

by

Robert R. Byrd and Benny G. Coxton

1975

. When in Rome, do as the Romans do

. Secure and review your job description

. Go slowly at first, pick up momentum gradually--be going full speed after 4-6 months

. Build key interpersonal relationships

. Know your "boss" and his/her expectations

. Learn and abide by appropriate policies

- building level
- system level
- state level
- federal level

. Work harder than anyone around you, but don't complain about it

. Policies may or may not be written--Keep a memo notebook--A memo may constitute a policy or policy revision

. Learn the characteristics of local people--each community differs

. Learn traditions and cherished beliefs

. Impose self-limits and learn real limits, realizing that as mutual confidence and trust builds, more and more freedom and responsibility will be granted to you

. Learn that a leader must also be a follower

. Get help from anyone and everyone around you--ask for help

. Be other-centered--give credits to others

. Concentrate on implementation strategies (accept objectives)

Appendix B

(contd)

"DO'S AND DON'TS OF PROJECT ADMINISTRATION"

- Display high trust in colleagues
- Become skilled at communications--various modes
- Fill the gaps--if objectives are already set up adequately, concentrate on strategies and evaluation, etc.
- Learn each person and learn each person's role, including yours and how it fits
- Concentrate on tasks
- Be sure to master fiscal policies and procedures early
- Orchestrate involvement--other agencies, individuals (do a resource analysis)
- Carry everyone along with you
- Plan your time lines and deadlines and stick by them the best you can
- Expect "rough sledding" the first year--the second year will be better
- Concentrate on problem solving, issues and not personalities
- Remember you're the new kid on the block--the professionals have made their place
- Honor every request coming your way with reasonable expediency
- Concentrate on alternatives
- Keep communications open--never close off!
- Become knowledgeable of organizational development
- Become knowledgeable of sound management principals
- Recognize and follow "proper channels"--create new ones if needs indicate
- Develop a system of handling the day to day paper work
- When problems occur, ask yourself, to what degree am I part of the problem?

Appendix B

(contd)

"DO'S AND DON'TS OF PROJECT ADMINISTRATION"

- Establish procedures for dealing with all aspects of encumbrances, receipts, shelving of items, inventory usage
- Be optimistic... It is almost impossible to be innovative, problem solving oriented, creative with a "can't do it--it won't work" attitude.
- Delegate decisions as close to the action/implementation as possible
- Establish various levels of decision making
- Have well established criteria for selection of personnel... That is probably the most important decision administrators make.